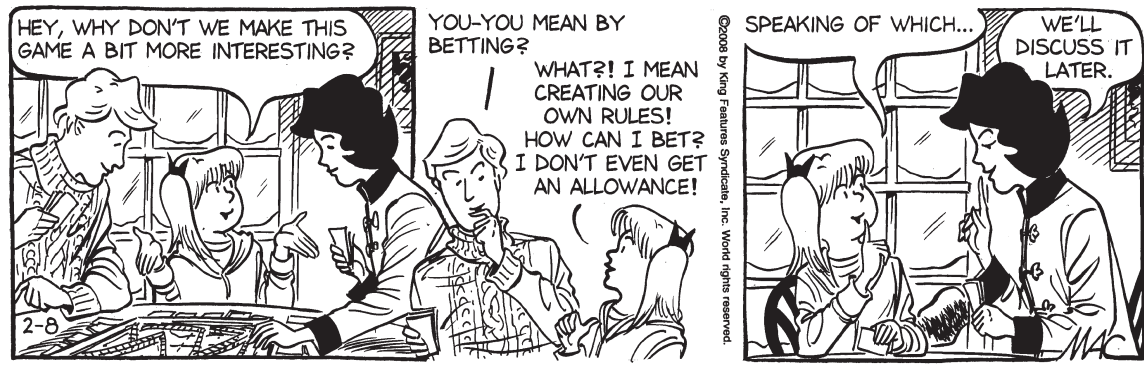
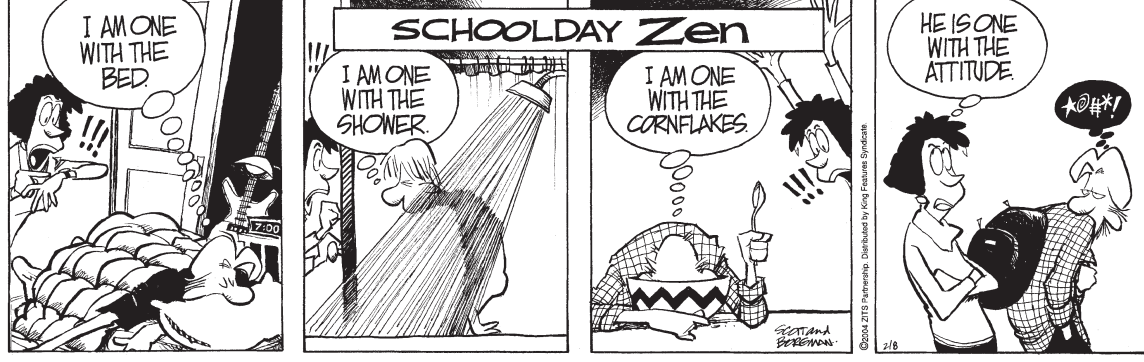


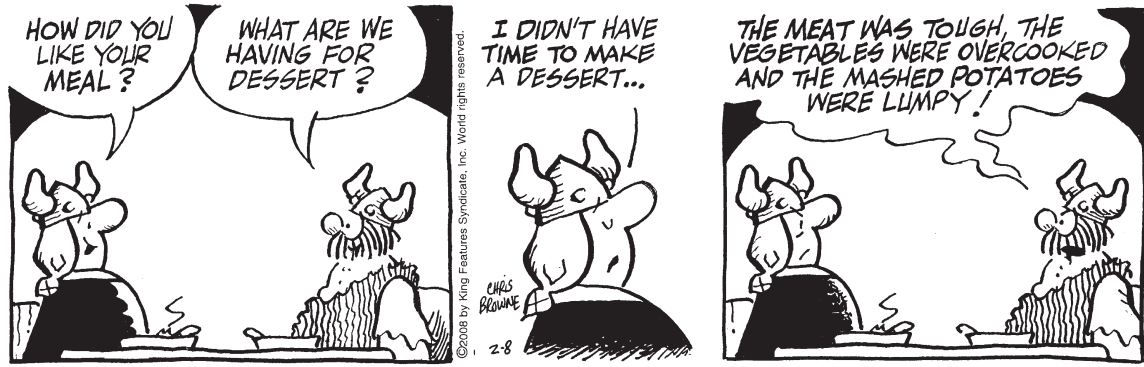
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



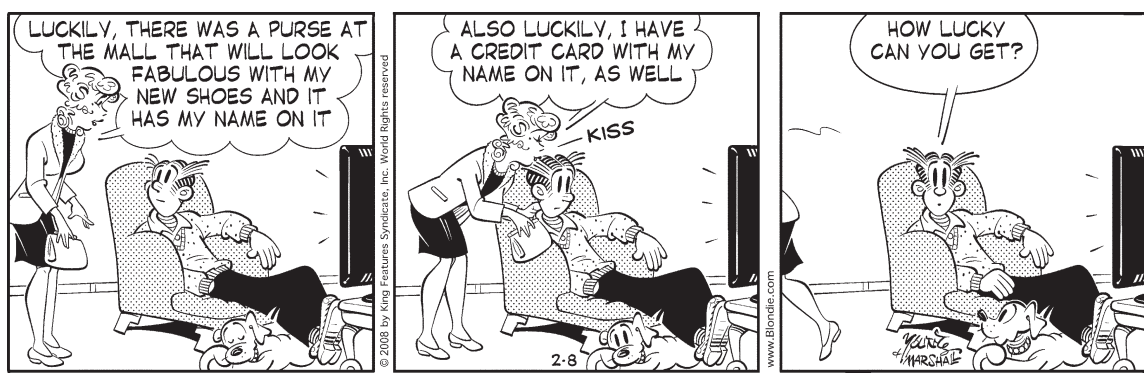
Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



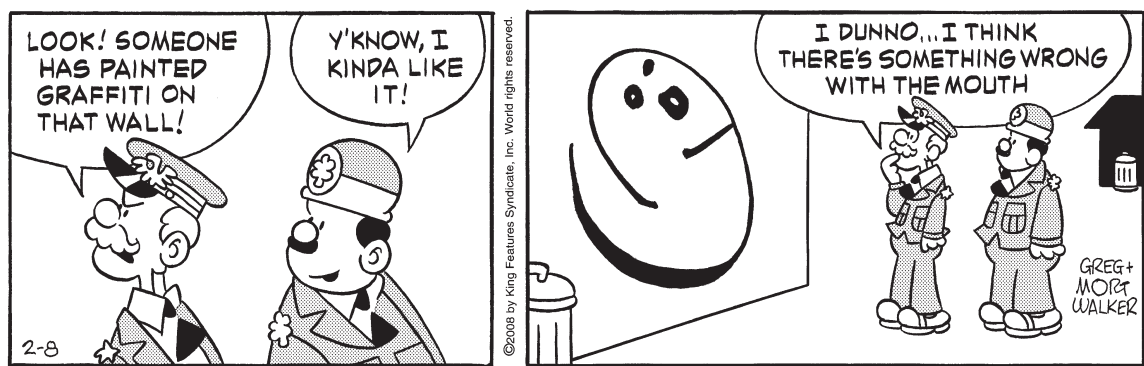
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



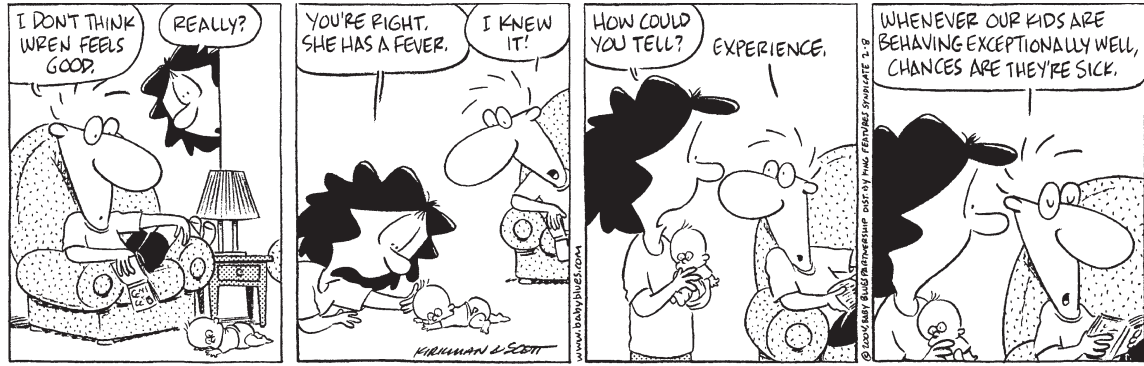
Blondie • Chic Young



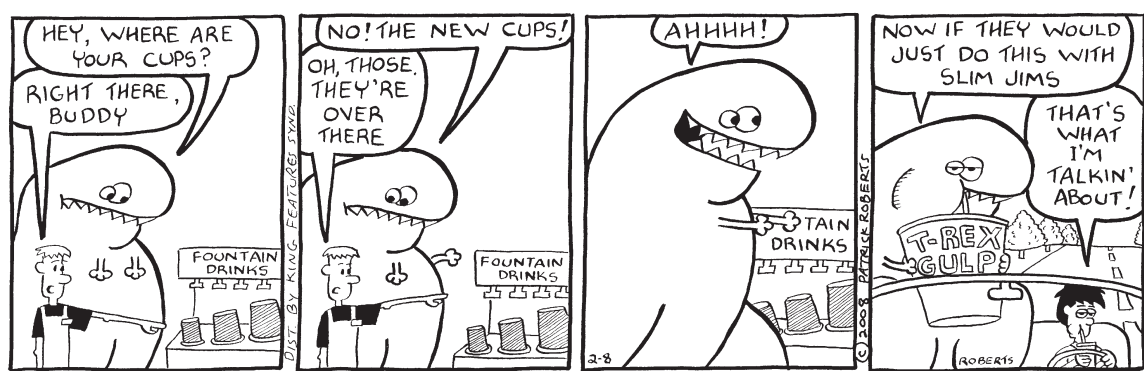
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



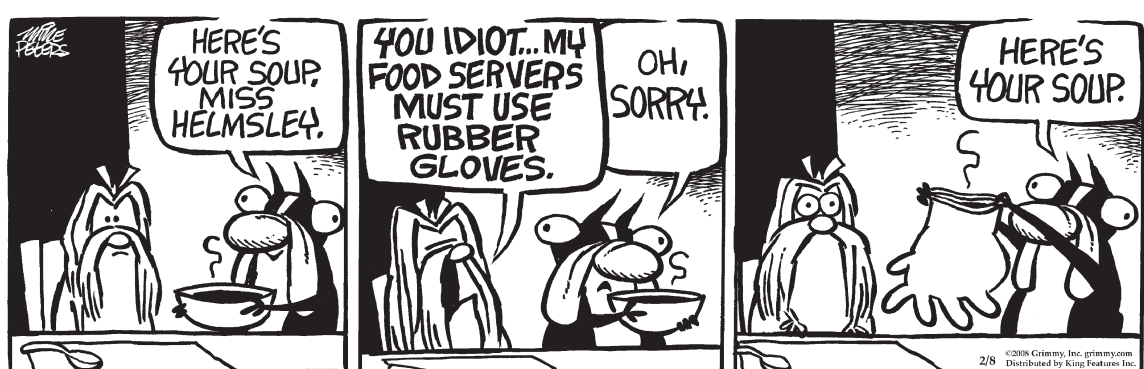
Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



Tod the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



Cryptoquip

NH DHT CYUPM PHCRVIZQ NSVRZZBDHZ SI WUW IRS F
IUMZ FRPNRII, VZPPZCC RPN BDQDHZ, LIWSN XFQW
VIRUF QYHTIN VZ IUMZID FYILSWY F HWG GIVUDHZ
OISSI: "VXPOW YIWNH'S LFP."
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: DO YOU THINK NOTABLES LIKE RANDALL, BENNETT AND BLAIR SHOULD BE LIKELY TO WIN TONY AWARDS?
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals U
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals E

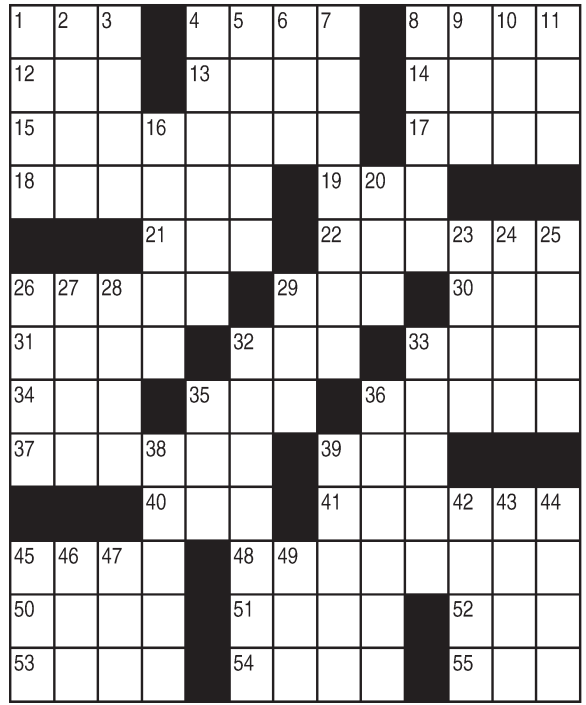
Crossword

- ACROSS**
1 Director Howard
4 Tries the tea
8 Urban pall
12 Beerlike beverage
13 Get ready
14 "G.W.T.W." acreage
15 Mien
17 Crafts' mates
18 Influence
19 Postal Creed
21 Witness
22 Keel
26 February figure
29 Yon maiden
30 Sinbad's flier
31 Shakespeare's river
32 Lady's man?
33 Lofty
34 Feline sign
35 Choose
36 Impudent
- DOWN**
1 "The Amazing —"
2 Any of five
3 Soft ball?
4 Sea-soned
5 Really mad
6 Cribbage scorer
7 Princess Diana's family name
8 Lennon cohort
9 Scratch
10 Tidbit
11 Petrol
- ACROSS**
37 Mooring site
39 Massachusetts cape
40 Jewel
41 10 to the 100th power
45 Sweater material
48 What banns announce
50 Vagrant
51 Olympic sword
52 Sprite
53 Part of B.&O.
54 "Monopoly" card
55 Allow
- DOWN**
16 Lacquer component
20 Rowboat need
23 Rainbow
24 Yuletide quaffs
25 Needing liniment
26 At peace
27 Eye layer
28 Indigent
29 Smack
32 Sent unwanted e-mail
33 Viet-name city
35 Indivisible
36 Slept soundly?
38 Northern hemisphere?
39 Match
42 Author Greene
43 Amorous look
44 Took off
45 Personal question?
46 La-la lead-in
47 Sapporo sash
49 Mimic

Solution time: 25 mins.

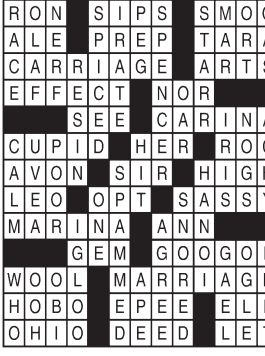


Yesterday's answer 2-8

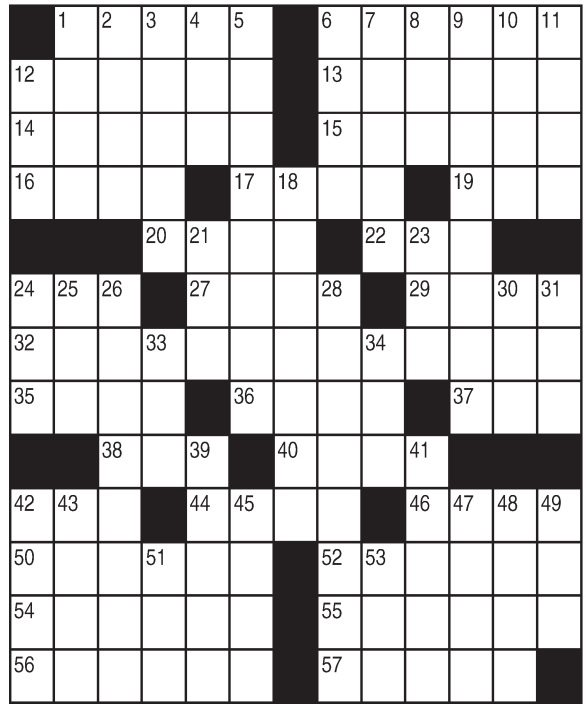


- ACROSS**
1 Attempts
6 Turn on a pivot
12 Low pH
13 Overly decorated
14 Elk
15 Hines or Phyle
16 Gaelic
17 Read bar codes
19 Donkey
20 Cold War abbr.
22 Hood's weapon
24 Lawyers' org.
27 Burden
29 Slapstick arsenal
32 1942 Jack Benny movie
35 Uncomplicated
36 Unuttered "alas"
37 Peacock network
38 Asian holiday
40 Bewildered
- DOWN**
2 Gratuities mo.
3 Farewell
4 Morsel
5 Victor over paper
6 Pop
7 Twisted
8 Hostel
9 Holiday
10 Greek vowels
11 Monocle piece
12 Shock partner
18 Skull-related
21 — -mo
23 Likely
24 Chowd down
25 Feathery neck-wear
- DOWN**
26 Hard to comprehend
28 Yukon transportation
30 Recede
31 Moment
33 Storm center
34 Commonest English word
39 One of the bases
41 Monastery bigwig
42 Farm measure
43 Haiku or limerick
45 Picnic invaders
47 Lounge around
48 Les Etats- with "out"
51 Trinity member
53 Extinct New Zealander

Solution time: 27 mins.



Yesterday's answer 2-9



Bridge

Here is an opening-lead problem presented some years ago by the British Bridge World magazine to a group of international stars. You are South, East-West are vulnerable, and the bidding has gone:

North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	1♦	Dble
5♦	5♥	Dble	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Your hand is:
♠ K743 ♥ A ♦ J10964 ♣ A82
Which card would you lead?
* * *

Opening-Lead Quiz

The panel's vote: eight for the ace of hearts, three for the ace of clubs, two for the three of spades, one for the jack of diamonds.

ALAN HIRON, conductor of the panel, commented: "After this auction, it seems a good idea to lead an ace to inspect dummy before deciding upon the best method of attack. Unfortunately, releasing the ace of hearts can prove fatal. If the setting trick must come from a ruff in partner's hand, either the ace of clubs or a low spade lead looks better than the ace of hearts."

Other comments were:
LEDENTU: "Ace of hearts. I want to see dummy. I hope I won't be punished for being so curious!"
CROWHURST: "Ace of hearts. Curious bidding this; somebody is bidding on distribution. The defense must be directed onto the right lines as soon as possible, and the ace of hearts surely cannot damage partner's hand."
FILARSKI: "Three of spades. We may be able to come to a ruff somewhere. My plan is to lead a spade and when in with the ace of hearts, try the ace of clubs. I should be able to judge whether partner wants a spade ruff or another club."
NUNES: "Ace of clubs. My first instinct was the ace of hearts, but why not the ace of clubs, retaining trump control? If I do set up their club suit, there are unlikely to be any discards that matter while I've still got the ace of hearts."
COLLINGS: "Ace of clubs. This will defeat the contract if partner has a singleton or doubleton club, or even a singleton spade (I can switch at trick two). The ace of hearts could be a disastrous lead, giving up control. P.S. Why did I double?"
SMART: "Jack of diamonds. All passion spent, all subtlety abandoned." For the record, the ace of hearts would have been disastrous, as partner had a singleton club -- as well as a singleton heart!

South dealer.
North-South vulnerable.

NORTH		
♠ A 7 6 2		
♥ A 9 8 4		
♦ 8 4 3		
♣ A Q		
WEST		
♠ 9 5 4 3		
♥ 5		
♦ K 7 2		
♣ 10 8 7 5 2		
EAST		
♠ K 10 8		
♥ 6 2		
♦ Q J 10 5		
♣ K 9 6 3		
SOUTH		
♠ Q J		
♥ K Q J 10 7 3		
♦ A 9 6		
♣ J 4		

The bidding:
South 1♥ West Pass North 3♥ East Pass
Opening lead — five of clubs.

Piece de Resistance

Assume you're in four hearts and West leads a club. You can see at a glance that if either black-suit finesse were to succeed, you'd make the contract, so let's say you start out by taking the club finesse.

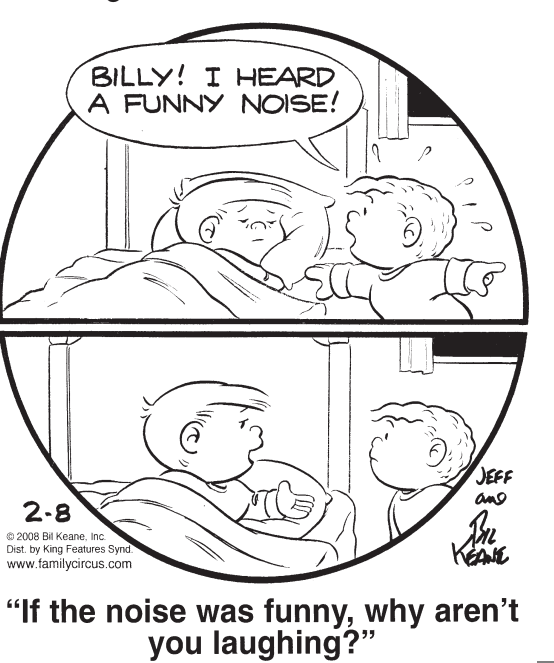
East wins dummy's queen with the king and shifts to the queen of diamonds. It doesn't particularly matter whether you win this diamond or the next one with the ace; sooner or later you'll have to try a spade finesse to make the contract. When you do, East turns up with the king, and you go down one.

If by any chance you played the hand this way, you could try to assuage yourself by blaming the bad luck you had in losing both finesses. You could argue that the odds were 3-1 that at least one of the finesses would succeed. But this argument could be shot down by your partner, who might say with some asperity that you had blown an ice-cold contract.

All you had to do, he might say, is go up with the ace of clubs at trick one, draw trumps, lead the queen of spades and finesse. True, you'd lose the queen to the king and East would cash the king of clubs before shifting to a diamond, but this would not stop you from making the contract.

You'd win the diamond with the ace, cash the jack of spades, cross to dummy with a trump and discard a diamond on the ace of spades. You could then concede your remaining diamond to the enemy, but you would have 10 tricks -- six hearts, two spades, a club and a diamond -- to show for your efforts.

Family Circus • Bill Keane



"If the noise was funny, why aren't you laughing?"